

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 405  
By Cooper

A RESOLUTION relative to the use of fescue grasses by state agencies.

WHEREAS, the detrimental effects of certain fescue grasses have increasingly received attention throughout the mid-South during the past decade; and

WHEREAS, the extensive replacement of native and/or more diverse grasslands with fescue has been identified as a major cause of the decline of some wildlife species; and

WHEREAS, during the past four decades, Tennessee and other Southeastern states have seen a drastic increase in the use of Kentucky-31 tall fescue and sericea lespedeza in grasslands and pastures; and

WHEREAS, as a result, loss of native grasslands and loss of grassland diversity have resulted in the decline of many ground-nesting birds; and

WHEREAS, in fact, eighteen species of neotropical and resident birds are significantly declining, including the bobwhite quail, loggerhead shrikes, orchard orioles, prairie warblers, indigo buntings, Henslow's sparrows, field sparrows, and common yellowthroats; and

WHEREAS, fescue is often the grass of choice for several good reasons, including price, durability, and soil erosion control; however, there are other grass or grass-legume mixtures that would adequately substitute for fescue in most applications; and

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WHEREAS, the increasing public awareness of and momentum against the inundation of fescue grass is perhaps best evidenced by the new federal Farm Bill programs that provide incentives for the installation of conservation practices to benefit wildlife and their habitats; and

WHEREAS, the cessation or limitation of the use of fescue grasses by state agencies would not only provide a tremendous boost in improving wildlife habitat, but would also save taxpayer dollars; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That this General Assembly hereby urges and encourages all state agencies to cease, or at least limit, their use of fescue grasses as groundcover on state property, except in non-wildlife use situations in which fescue grasses are the most appropriate choice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That each state agency is encouraged to reduce its use of fescue grasses by twenty-five percent (25%) in fiscal year 1998-1999.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the commissioner of each state department and the executive director of each state board or commission having jurisdiction over state real property.